

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, June 15, 1999

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 15, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CLIFF STEARNS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) for 5 minutes.

GROWING CRISIS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I wish you and my colleagues in this House a good morning, although reports that have reached us this morning from far places on the globe are not so present. We awakened today to hear of a growing crisis off the Korean Peninsula in the Yellow Sea as the respective navies of North and South Korea clash.

Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest that in the prerecorded comments that one of our government spokesmen offered dealing with this situation, this spokesman said, well, in the past when there has been this type of confrontation, the North Koreans retreat or back off, and, quite frankly, we are surprised that the North Koreans did not follow that action this morning.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me point out to that government spokesman and to my colleagues precisely why the North Koreans failed to back off. See, Mr. Speaker, the sad fact is the outlaw nation of North Korea is now for all intents and purposes a nuclear power. That is the cold, grim, stark reality.

Proliferation of nuclear technology, technology stolen by the Chinese Government and given to other nations like North Korea, has now borne its bitter fruit. Moreover, shockingly, surprisingly, Mr. Speaker, this administration has engaged in the willful, naive transfer of technology. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, when I first arrived in the Capital City for my first term, prior to taking the oath of office I had occasion to then meet with the Secretary of Defense at that time, Secretary Perry. I asked him why this administration was so intent on giving, giving two nuclear reactors to North Korea. The Secretary responded that I needed a briefing, a briefing that, by the way, was never forthcoming, Mr. Speaker.

A couple of points that we should bring out. We do not need a briefing to know that one does not put their hand on the eye of the stove when it is turned on and not expect to get burned. Now, the sad fact is that of those two reactors which this administration supplied to North Korea, within the last 6 months the U.N. inspection teams finally went in. The first thing they found out was that one reactor was intact, but the core of the second reactor was missing. Couple that with the fact that the North Koreans have developed what they call the Taepo Dong missile, an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the continental United States, and, Mr. Speaker, we begin to understand full well why the North Koreans continue to act provocatively. Add to that the extreme famine that the North Koreans find themselves in, documented cases of cannibalism; a totalitarian Communist state that does not view peace as its logical means of existence, that will have to turn to hostilities, and we see the situation that has been set up.

How sad it is, Mr. Speaker, that there is such a radically different interpretation from my left-leaning friends in the administration when it comes to providing for the common defense. How sad it is, Mr. Speaker, that the President of the United States 2 years ago stood at the podium behind me here and said that our children no longer faced the threat of annihilation by nuclear missiles, that nuclear missiles were not targeted at the United States.

Mr. Speaker, the President was, to be diplomatic, sorely mistaken in that evaluation.

Mr. Speaker, this House and those of us who serve in the legislative branch

cannot continue to allow this type of drift and uncertainty in our foreign policy and in our national security situation. We must take seriously our role to provide for the common defense. That means steps to cut off the theft of our secrets by China. That means a realistic, not a socialistic utopian view, but a realistic assessment of the threat offered by an outlaw nation like North Korea and that also entails an honest assessment of our friends, the Russians, in the Balkan theater.

CONGRESS MUST ADDRESS THE THREAT OF GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, gun violence against children in this country has reached a point where even Congress can no longer ignore its consequences. Even though there still have been the 10 to 15 children, victims of violence across the country, finally it was some very stark school shootings that focused the attention.

I sat on the floor of this Chamber and heard the Speaker articulate from this well how finally Congress and the House of Representatives would be coming forward. We could not rush to judgment before Memorial Day bringing something to the floor of the House. We had instead to take a more deliberative course of action.

Well, we have seen what has been the result of that more deliberate course of action. After the NRA has been spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per day over the last couple of weeks, even more in their fund-raising efforts, we now have coming before the House of Representatives a rather confused set of provisions, and we are poised to pull another Kosovo where we cannot go right, left, sideways or forward.

Mr. Speaker, that is unfortunate because there is, in fact, a very simple answer for the House of Representatives to move forward. First and foremost, it is to refine and pass the provisions that did secure approval in the U.S. Senate restricting the magazine clips, having child access protection and dealing with the gun show loophole to the Brady bill. These are modest steps, but the American public supports it, and it would be an opportunity for us to show that we have got the message and can work together.